



# Condominium Security

RESIDENTIAL SECURITY has become a critical component of life in today's modern world. Whether you live in a townhouse or an apartment-style condominium, knowing that your home is protected provides peace of mind both when you are away and when you are home. "Security is a huge issue and there are a lot of things that you can do to protect yourself," Maria Bartolotti, managing director and owner of New Concept Management, a Calgary-based property management company.

Although high-tech security systems and digital surveillance cameras are an added de-terrent against crime, Bartolotti notes that it is often the simple things that really make a difference. Things like ensuring that the door to your building is securely closed after you enter or exit and refusing to allow someone into the building unless you know them. "Make them pull out their key and open the door themselves, says Bartolotti. "You could be letting someone into the

building who is essentially staking out the place."

Residents can apply the same premise to underground parkades. "You want to ensure that the overhead door is shut behind you. If



**"You could be letting someone into the building who is essentially stalking the place..."**

Maria Bartolotti, owner of New Concept Management

someone is looking to break in nine times out of ten they will wait for a car to drive in and then sneak in behind it," explains Bartolotti.

Bartolotti always recommends that her apartment style condominium clients install a jimmy plate on all entry way doors, as well as high-security locks. The kind that require authorization for duplication are best, she says.

Residents should take a block watch approach and watch for and report suspicious people on the premises. "If someone comes to your door, be cautious and ask for identification," says Bartolotti.

Proper lighting is also a large deterrent to criminal activities. "You want to make sure that your building has ample lighting both inside and outside and in the parkades. There shouldn't be any dark areas where people can hide." If you live in a townhouse, ensure that your outside lights are working and the bulbs are replaced when required.

Outside landscaping is also very important. The management company should instruct landscapers to keep the bushes and hedges trimmed back so that people can't hide behind them.

If owners have concerns about the level of security in their complex, they should send a letter outlining their position to the board of directors via the management company and ask the board to look into it.

If you are living in the downtown core where security seems to be of a higher concern, suggest to your board that they have the police department community liaison come out and speak about how owners can protect themselves and their building.

Most would agree, however, that when it comes to home security, concerned and in-

formed neighbours are the best defence against crime. "Get to know your neighbours," says Bartolotti. "Have a meet and greet or a barbecue in the summer or hold a social function in the social room, and if you are going on holidays, tell people so they know to keep an eye out." CL